

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Pete Visclosky  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-405, The Capitol  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
2256 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

As you begin the process of developing the subcommittee's FY 2021 appropriations bill, we write to urge you to consider including report language supporting military diversity in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Defense Appropriations Act. This language will help ensure robust diversity among the officers of our nation's great military.

While the military academies have made varying degrees of progress in reaching out to underrepresented communities, they have not made the substantial gains needed to ensure diversity among military officers.

As a nation, we must work to eliminate the barriers preventing those in underrepresented communities from obtaining a world-class education and serving their country. We should not let an aspiring American's residence, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation stand in the way of this pursuit.

Therefore, we urge you to include the following language in the report accompanying the Fiscal Year 2021 Defense Appropriations Act:

**Minority Outreach and Officer Accessions**

“Minorities remain underrepresented in the general officer ranks across the Services. To build a more diverse organization, the Committee supports efforts to conduct effective outreach and recruiting programs focused on increasing officer accessions in minority communities and encourages the Secretary of Defense and the Service Secretaries to support efforts, with both personnel and resources, to improve diversity in the military.”


These efforts are supported by the findings and conclusions of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) [report](#), which was established by the National Defense Authorization Act. The MLDC's report indicates that the Armed Services' leaders should reflect the diversity of the service members they lead. The MLDC found that “the Armed Forces have not yet succeeded in developing a continuing stream of leaders who are as demographically diverse as the Nation they serve.” They also concluded that a diverse Armed Force, composed of men and women “with different skills, experiences, and backgrounds are needed to respond to new and emerging threats.”

We also must recognize the positive effects of a more diverse military. The Department of Defense's most recent five-year Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion states, "diversity is a strategic imperative, critical to mission readiness and accomplishment, and a leadership requirement." Preserving diversity across our military – including enlisted personnel and the officer corps – supports creative problem solving and decision making and contributes to mutual understanding of other countries and cultures. Moreover, a diverse military force reflects our values as a democratic society, improving public perception and trust in our armed forces.

We appreciate your leadership in investing in our national defense and ask that you take an active approach towards improving diversity in our military. This report language is a first step towards eliminating barriers that prevent those in underrepresented communities from obtaining a world-class education and serving their country.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to improve diversity in our nation's military.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress

## **FY 21 Report Language Encouraging Military Officer Diversity**

### **List of Signatories**

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